

*The 2002
State of the County
Address*



*Presented by
County Executive
Jack Doyle*

Thank you for joining me here tonight. I want to thank John Hover and the Hover-Davis Corporation for inviting us to this wonderful facility.

I also want to thank Karen Hickey for leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Karen is a great asset to her employer here at Hover-Davis and she is also a real hero in our community. Karen has a son and two daughters who are currently serving our country in the US Army, the Army Reserves and the Air National Guard. Thank you for being here tonight, Karen, and thank you and your family for serving our nation.

While it is my responsibility tonight to present this year's State of the County, the subject on everyone's mind is the state of our job market.

In fact, there can be no doubt that the number one issue facing us today is jobs.

For our part in county government, our unparalleled record of stable county property taxes — 10 straight years without a tax increase — has been the foundation of our efforts to create and retain jobs. Our policy of property tax stability has made us the economic engine of Western New York, keeping us a growing and vibrant community while our neighbors in Buffalo and Syracuse flounder.

Today, as our national, state, and local economies emerge from challenges, it is very clear that we cannot abandon our efforts to keep taxes stable. It is equally clear that we must do more.

Over the past year, the fight to retain jobs has lost ground. The closing of the Corning facility in Henrietta, the collapse of Global Crossing, layoffs by Valeo and other employers have left thousands of our friends and neighbors out of work or financially imperiled.

Who are the unemployed? They are mothers and fathers; wives and husbands; single people and married couples; homeowners and renters. They are line workers and middle managers; janitors and vice presidents. They are college graduates trying to launch their careers, young families worried about paying their mortgage, and middle-aged workers concerned about sending their children to college and saving for retirement. They are Republicans and Democrats. They live in the city, the suburbs, and our rural areas. And they are all taxpayers.

Even if you haven't lost your job, you probably know someone - a friend, a relative, a co-worker, who has been laid off or is unable to find work. Understandably, as people sit with their families around the kitchen table, they are asking themselves — is my job next?

Clearly, we can't afford to continue this cycle of downsizing and uncertainty in the job market. History has shown that we have always met this challenge head on; our future will be defined by how well we meet this challenge as we move forward.

To clearly see where we need to go, we need to remember where we've been. At its peak, Kodak employed 62,000 people. Today, its work force is down to 22,000. Xerox, which had nearly 15,000 local employees less than a decade ago, has cut back by nearly a third, cutting more than 4,000 jobs.

Even as the big companies were laying off tens of thousands of workers, Monroe County gained more than 100,000 new jobs. Small and medium sized companies led the way, creating good paying jobs in fields like optics, information technology, and biomedicine. And our economic development initiatives played a key role, helping create or retain nearly 50,000 jobs at companies like Heidelberg, Polyshot, Coopervision, and Hover-Davis.

While our economic development strategy brought success in the past, the economic situation has changed. And we must change with it.

We first started adjusting our economic development strategy last year, in response to the events of last September when it became clear that we were facing a downturn in the local economy. In January of this year, I



convened an economic summit to discuss job creation strategies with area business and community leaders. The summit focused on generating concrete suggestions to improve our local economy and create jobs.

That summit reaffirmed the basic elements of our existing strategy:

- Create the right environment for jobs.
- Fight to bring in new businesses and retain existing employers here in Monroe County.
- Train a highly motivated, highly skilled work force that is well prepared to compete in today's high-tech economy.

While the summit confirmed the soundness of our strategy, we also learned that we need to do even more. We need to expand upon our most successful programs, launch major new initiatives and fine tune some of our old ones. Devising the right strategy may be important; but it is the implementation of the right strategy that is key. Our neighbors who are out of work want results, not rhetoric — paychecks, not promises. They want action from their elected officials. They want us to put jobs first.

Tonight, I am extremely pleased to announce JOBSFirst, a plan to create and retain jobs in Monroe County. As part of this effort, we will move forward on the following new initiatives:

- ***Creating a JOBSFirst Team*** made up of business and community leaders who will act as a job creation strike force to target potential employers, encouraging them to locate and expand here in Monroe County. The JOBSFirst Team will bring everything our community has to offer to the table — financing, incentives, education, training and infrastructure. By partnering with business leaders and groups like the Greater Rochester Enterprise (GRE), we can present a united front that will convince companies that Monroe County is the right place to locate or expand their business.
- ***Enhancing Jobs Plus*** will make Monroe County even more competitive. I proposed Jobs Plus to the county's industrial development agency three years ago and, since its inception, it's been successful — helping 49 companies locate and expand in Monroe County and creating nearly 3,000 new jobs. We can do even better by improving the Jobs Plus program, offering greater incentives when employers create even more jobs.
- ***Expanding the GreatRate Program*** to take this very successful program and make it even better. The GreatRate program makes it more affordable for companies to borrow money to purchase machinery and equipment. In just three years, we've helped 45 companies purchase machinery and equipment so they could expand their operations and create jobs. But some companies haven't been eligible. That's why I am proposing we establish the GreatRebate Program to help small and medium sized employers invest in new equipment to increase their local workforce.
- ***Creating a Home Business Incubator Program*** will give people access to the information, tools, and advice they need to launch a successful home business. We must do more to help people build companies from the ground up. Home businesses have the potential to become big businesses. Hover-Davis is a perfect example. This company started with John Hover working out of a barn in his backyard. Today, Hover-Davis has 143 employees who work right here in this state-of-the-art, 66,000 square foot facility. How many other Hover-Davis' are out there, right now? Let's give them the tools and information they need to get their home business off the ground.
- ***Starting a Patent/Seed-Capital Fund*** will help build companies that have intellectual capital, such as a patent, but lack the start-up capital and other support they need to commercialize their idea. Monroe County already ranks in the top three communities in the nation for patents per capita. Let's build on that record of success and give aspiring business owners the resources they need to get their ideas off the ground.



- **Increasing Trade and Export Assistance** to make it easier for Monroe County companies to identify markets for their products. Our area exports \$14 billion in goods and services to more than 165 countries around the world. On a per-capita basis, that's more than any other area in the United States. In fact, we out-export 40 entire states. We must take full advantage of our position as an export leader by expanding our relationships with organizations like the International Business Council (IBC) and programs like the Global Technology Network (GTN) at the US Agency for International Development. Expanding partnerships like this will help connect local businesses and the products their employees manufacture with waiting markets around the world.

Beyond these important incentives, our greatest asset in the fight to remain competitive is our people. And today, our mission is to build a skilled workforce for the jobs of tomorrow.

Building a skilled work force may be the most difficult part of economic development — it may also be the most important. You can do everything else right and if you don't have a skilled work force that can do the work, you aren't going to be able to attract and retain jobs. But we do have a built in advantage over other communities when it comes to building a skilled work force: we already have one. With technology and the economic environment constantly changing, we have to stay one step ahead of everyone else. And JOBSFirst is also designed to strengthen the skills of our work force.

- **Building MCC's Advanced Technology Education Center (ATEC)** will give students the skills they need to perform high-tech jobs. The ATEC will be one of our most important economic resources. And we will make it even more effective by creating a state-of-the-art research and development lab there to connect high-tech workers with employers and training.

Our community needs to get behind projects like this. As County Executive, I will lead the campaign to build the ATEC facility and I am also going to back efforts to secure state and federal funding for other worthwhile projects. Projects like the proposed Center for Biotechnology Education and Training at RIT, the expansion of the Institute of Optics and the proposed Fuel Cell Research Center, both at the University of Rochester. I will also fight for the jobs that will be created by the Center of Excellence and its spin-off businesses. They belong here in Monroe County.

- **Enhancing Job Training and Placement Services** will help connect the unemployed and displaced workers in our community with jobs. Monroe County will work with the Department of Labor, the Rochester Resource Alliance, and the Workforce Investment Board to enhance the services that connect the people who need jobs with the employers who have them. As part of my JOBSFirst effort, I call on the Workforce Investment Board to work with the Department of Labor and other partners to expand access to job training and job placement services. We have a lot of resources in this community for training and job placement. We need to use all of those resources and expand access by creating additional job centers and making better use of technology to link people to job opportunities.
- **Expanding Programs like the FIRST Robotics Competition and the Riedman Summer Technology Camp** will encourage young people to pursue careers in math, science, and technology. We've expanded these programs in recent years — and for good reason. The kids are learning new skills and developing an interest in subjects like math, computers, and electronics, and they are having a great time while they are doing it. Let's expand these programs even further — and let's support other programs that will prepare our young people to compete for jobs 10, 15, and 20 years from now.

We have the right work force and the right tools in place to attract employers. The final piece of JOBSFirst is to create the right environment for job growth — an environment that encourages companies and workers to make a long-term investment in our community.



- ***Creating a Graduate Incentive Program*** will ensure that more of the 50,000 students who attend colleges in our region remain in Monroe County after they graduate. Monroe County will partner with local banks, business organizations; creating a package of economic incentives that will encourage young people to live, work, and raise a family in Monroe County.
- ***Launching a Made in Monroe Campaign*** will make sure consumers know more about the products made here in Monroe County and encourage them to buy local goods made by local people. It is important that companies know that when they invest in local workers, we, in turn, will invest our hard-earned consumer dollars in their companies and their products.

Some choices are easy. When you buy film at the store, it comes in a yellow box. When you buy hot dogs, you buy Zweigle's. But identifying other local products isn't always as easy. How many of you know that "Not Dogs" — the vegetarian alternative to a hot dog — are made by Northern Soy, which is located right here in Monroe County? Now personally, I like my Zweigle's. But if I ever do eat a soy hot dog, you can bet it will be one made locally by Northern Soy.

We have a great work force and dedicated local companies. Whether it is computer parts or hot dogs, consumers can have more confidence that they are buying a high quality product when they know it was made by one of their neighbors in Monroe County.

- ***Holding the Line on Taxes*** is one of the most important things we can do to create the right environment for jobs. We know this, because we've done it — keeping property taxes stable for 10 straight years.

Lately, some people have been saying — why don't you just raise taxes? I'll tell you why. Because as hard as the economic slowdown has been on government budgets, it has been harder on family budgets. Many people have had their hours cut back, and they are bringing home less money. As a result of layoffs, many two-income families are now one-income families and they're struggling every single day just to pay the mortgage. As hard as it is for governments to make due with less, it is much, much harder for working families to make due with less. The last thing the county government should do right now is add to their burden by raising their property taxes. That's why tax increases are off the table. Instead of raising taxes, the county government is cutting back, delaying non-essential projects and reducing spending.

I know it is somewhat unconventional to focus so intently on one single issue — jobs — in a State of the County address. But building jobs is the single issue that defines what the future will look like for the people who live and work in this community.

We will do whatever it takes to turn our local economy in a positive direction. We will concentrate our efforts on finding practical, attainable solutions to create jobs for the thousands of Monroe County workers who are currently unemployed. And we must all work together - putting aside any partisan political considerations or personal agendas so we can more clearly focus on the needs of Monroe County workers.

Over the coming days and weeks, I will launch these JOBSFirst initiatives. And I will strengthen our already existing partnerships, working even more closely with business and community organizations and, of course, building on the strong partnership we have with Governor George Pataki and his Empire State Development agency.

I have great confidence in this community and its work force. I know that our best days are ahead of us, not behind us. I know that when we roll up our sleeves and put jobs first, there is nothing we cannot accomplish together.

Thank you and good night.

